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TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 20

BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

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Lesson Twenty

STRENGTH

In your tableau, Key 8 is the first of the second row of Keys, which, you remember, represents the laws or agencies whereby the principles symbolized by the Keys numbered from 1 to 7 are carried into operation. Key 8 represents the law which is the means for expressing the principle of attention pictured by the Magician.

This law is that of suggestion. It is dealt with at some length in Lesson 3 of SEVEN STEPS. Review what is written there in connection with this present lesson.

By means of **suggestion**, the force concentrated by acts of attention is carried into manifestation for the modification of external conditions. Remember, the force so concentrated is a perfect **Unity**, designated by the Hebrew noun אחד, achad or echud. It is also the Love-force as indicated by the numeral identity between אחד, Unity, and אהבה, ahebah, Love. Ponder this in meditation and you will find another clue to the Secret of Works.

Note particularly that the number 13, which is the value of each of these two Hebrew words, is the number of a Tarot Key which, as you will learn from Lesson 29, is related both to Unity and to Love.

The woman in Key 8 is the High Priestess, the Empress, and the Lady Eve of Key 6. She symbolizes the human aspect of subconsciousness controlling and directing the functions of every organ in the body, and directing the currents of **Prana**, the vital energy of Life-Breath. The adjustment of personality to the point where such control and direction changes bodily structure and chemistry to the degree that the physical organism may make practical application of the high potencies of superconscious life is the work of subconsciousness operating in accordance with the law of suggestion.

Like the Empress, the woman is fair-haired and crowned. Her crown is of flowers, instead of stars. This hints that we are concerned in Key 8 with organic processes rather than with the inorganic cosmic forces symbolized by the hexagrams of the Empress' crown.

Furthermore, flowers are the reproductive organs of the vegetable kingdom, and a crown always stands for Will because in Qabalah the technical name for the Primal Will is כתר, Kether, the Crown. Thus the crown of flowers means that the sovereignty exercised by the human subconsciousness over the various grades of being below the human level is a

sovereignty having to do with intelligent control of the serpent-power which is the agency at work in vegetable, animal and human reproduction.

Over the woman's head is a horizontal 8 like that hovering over the head of the Magician. She partakes of his influence and typifies subconscious reaction to the principle he personifies. In one sense, everything symbolized by Key 8 may be regarded as being a development of the symbolism of the roses and lilies growing in the Magician's garden.

The Empress and the High Priestess sit. This woman, like the one in Key 6, stands. The High Priestess is subconsciousness conceived as being the recorder and preserver of the various impressions originating at self-conscious and superconscious levels. The Empress typifies the **germination** of mental images through subconscious responses to conscious and superconscious stimuli. The woman in Key 6 shows a more active response of subconsciousness to superconscious potencies and guidance. Now, in Key 8, the woman is shown controlling all the forces of nature below the human level.

Her robe is pure white like the inner garments of the Fool and the Magician. This garment represents the purified aspect of subconsciousness which it assumes as a result of intelligent application of the law that it is, at all times, amenable to control by suggestion. White stands also for the Divine Unity and is an emblem of purity and innocence, hence of regeneration which results in a personal realization of the truth that the ALL is ONE.

The chain of roses which goes round the woman's waist and encircles the lion's neck is intended to represent a figure 8, though this is not clearly shown in the picture. Roses symbolize desire, hence the chain is a systematic series of desires woven together. Rightly cultivated and combined, desires are the most potent form of suggestion. By definite formulation of desire in harmony with the real nature of things, we may dominate the mighty forces of nature below the human level of activity.

As king of beasts, the lion represents the highest forms of development in the kingdoms of nature below the level of man. He is the ruling principle of the animal nature. He is also the alchemical symbol of one of the most important principles in the Great Work. That work is the transmutation of the gross forms of natural humanity into the Stone of the Wise, perfected man.

In alchemical books we read of the Green Lion, the Red Lion and the Old Lion. The Green Lion is the animal nature before it has been ripened and purified. The Red Lion is the animal nature brought under control of the higher aspects of man's spiritual being. The Red Lion is the one in Key 8.

The Old Lion represents a special state of consciousness which becomes manifest after the work of purification has changed the Green Lion into the Red Lion. In the state of consciousness which the Old Lion symbolizes, one senses directly the eternal, radiant, mental

energy which, because it **was**, or existed, before anything else had been brought into manifestation, is, in time relations, older than anything else.

Among the ideas suggested by the word **lion** are: rulership (since the lion is the king of beasts), courage, bravery, valor (symbolized also by the color red), tenacity, resolve, fortitude, decision, will. We say that a person having these qualities has "backbone", and this links up with the lion as a symbol for the sign Leo, said by astrology to govern the back and spine.

North-Above is the direction attributed to the letter Teth and to Key 8. In the Cube of Space as shown in Lesson 18, North-Above is assigned to the northern edge of the cube.

Thus it is the upper boundary of the northern face and the northern boundary of the top face. The north face is assigned to the letter Peh and Key 16, which corresponds to the force astrologically related to the planet Mars. The top face corresponds to the direction Above, which is assigned to the letter Beth, to Key 1, and to the planet Mercury.

Thus in North-Above are joined the powers symbolized by Keys 1 and 16. Key 1 represents the self-conscious level of mental activity. Key 16 represents the fiery energies which, in Key 1, are symbolized by the red outer mantle of the Magician.

Alchemy affords another clue. In the books of its adepts, the Red Lion is said to represent Sulphur combined with Mercury. Sulphur is the Mars force, (North), and Mercury is related to the direction Above.

Key 8, then, shows what occurs when cosmic fire is controlled by self-conscious acts of attention. Furthermore, since Key 8 is North-**Above**, we may understand that what is pictured in this Key is a direct consequence of **intentional, conscious practice.**

The situation represented by the symbols of this Key is not a spontaneous, natural development. It is the result of deliberate intentions and of purposes consciously formulated. It is the consequence of knowledge consciously acquired; the outcome of practice consciously undertaken.

To be sure, the law of suggestion is a law which works whether we know anything about it or not. Yet it does not work **this** way unless we **do** know and apply our knowledge. Key 8 shows the positive and constructive use of the law of suggestion in the work of personal regeneration. What it symbolizes is a situation which never occurs without the introduction of an impulse proceeding from what Tarot typifies by the Magician.

Here we approach one difficulty of Ageless Wisdom. In order to perform the Great Work, we must undertake the initial stages **as if** we were doing something of our own volition.

Certainly it seems that way. It involves a distinct sense of effort. There is a deliberate exercise of power. Ways and means are carefully selected. The initial steps in the work require strict self-discipline. No person who does not determinedly "take himself in hand" ever performs the Great Work.

All this looks like the exercise of a very definite personal will and **feels like it** in the earlier stages of the practice. Yet the sages continually remind us that this feeling is illusive, and part of their traditional discipline consists in mental practice which builds up gradually a realization that the work is not accomplished by **personal** effort at all.

By prolonged practice of this kind, pursued sometimes for months and years without any apparent result, those who follow the Way of Liberation effect changes in their subconsciousness. These changes are symbolized in Key 8 and produce at the same time the result shown in Key 16.

When we come to the latter Key, the nature of this result will be more fully explained. Here we may say that it is the **overthrow of a false conception of personal activity by a lightning-like flash of true inspiration.** This is not by any means a **comfortable** experience, but it has most salutary results.

Because few persons have courage and persistence to continue the preliminary work in spite of its apparent fruitlessness, and because not many choose to practice the resolute denial of self-will required by every occult system of discipline, the number of adepts in proportion to the world's population is small.

All recent vaporings to the contrary notwithstanding, the time will never come when these first steps will not be required. No suspension of the discipline for any reason whatever can be made for the adherents of any school or teacher. For the discipline is not imposed by men or by higher beings. It is the consequence of natural laws of physical and mental growth. They can never be changed **because they are part of the essential nature of all living beings.**

The line of North-Above, being the upper northern edge of the Cube of Space, connects the upper end of the line North-East, assigned to Heh and the Emperor, to the upper end of the line North-West, assigned to Lamed and Justice. Thus Key 8 is shown to be the connecting link between Keys 4 and 11 **at the level of consciousness represented by the direction Above, the letter Beth, and Key l, the Magician.**

You have not yet received an interpretation of Key 11, but one of its meanings is **Work** or **Action**, or, as Hindus term it, **Karma.** Hence you will be able to understand that Key 8 is the connecting link which carries the power of Reason, the Constituting Intelligence (Key 4), into the field of activity which has to do with human action and its results.

What is pictured in Key 8 is the agency whereby the power of control over the conditions of our external environment, symbolized by Key 4, is brought to bear upon all the complex operations of natural law designated by the term **Karma.**

This means that **Karma can be modified.** It is true that action and reaction are equal, and that today brings us into situations which are consequences of our past actions. We have to work with these situations as they arise; but it makes a great deal of difference whether we approach them ignorantly or intelligently.

If we know the law, we may produce results not spontaneously provided by natural reactions to stimuli originating at some period in the past. It is by bringing about the situation pictured as the taming of the Red Lion that the Cosmic Reason may be brought to bear for the adjustment of Karmic reactions.

Reference to the diagram of the Cube which accompanies Lesson 18 will show you that the line corresponding to Key 8 is also the link between the line assigned to Zain (Key 6, the Lovers) and the line corresponding to Samekh (Key 14, Temperance). Since the **northern** ends of these two lines are joined by the line assigned to Key 8, we know that Key 8 may be regarded as being a link between that part of Key 6 which shows the woman, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the serpent, and that part of Key 14 which shows a lion, a vase of water, and a range of mountains over which floats a crown.

In most Tarot Keys, the part of the picture on the observer's left corresponds to the direction North, and the part of the design on the observer's right corresponds to South. This makes what is in the background correspond to the direction East, and what is in the foreground correspond to the direction West. Exceptions are Keys 16, 17, 18 and 10.

We look at the Tarot Keys from the symbolic West, facing the East. So do we look at the diagram of the Cube of Space, which is one of the most important esoteric clues, hitherto unpublished, to the meanings of Tarot.

Because you have not studied Key 14, it is inadvisable to enter into an explanation of Key 8 as connecting Keys 6 and 14. Yet the fact that these two Keys are so connected needs to be mentioned here, and you will do well to pay close attention to this part of the lesson. Remember, you already know, interiorly, the meaning of this, and the fact that we have brought the correspondence to your attention will begin to have its effect on your subconsciousness. Thus, when you reach Lesson 32, you will find that the explanations given there are easier to grasp because, in the meantime, the seed-idea now planted will have been growing.

EVERYTHING IS SPIRIT

Basic in the process of building the adytum within us, is right mental attitude. For many of us, right mental attitude means a complete reversal of opinions we held not so long ago. One such opinion is the belief that some things are spiritual while others are not. B. O. T. A. students should train themselves to remember the vital truth that there is only **one** power, which is also the **one** substance, and that this power, in all its myriad forms, is pure SPIRIT.

SPIRIT beats your heart. SPIRIT drives the flaming sun. SPIRIT is all there is. In some forms more visible in disguise! In other aspects, formless and invisible, as when the Bible says, "The earth was without form and void." The earth materials existed before creation, but these materials had not been compressed and congealed by the force of cosmic thought.

It is fitting, therefore, that the Qabalah, the ancient tradition of the Hebrew Wise Men, should assign the Intelligence of the Secret of All Spiritual Activities to the letter Teth, represented in Tarot by Key 8, Strength. The attribution reminds us of the truth that there are no unspiritual activities. Spirit was the only intelligence, wisdom, power, glory, love and the sum-total of everything in the beginning, even as it is now and ever will be.

No new element has been added. Neither has anything foreign been introduced into the scheme of things. SPIRIT IS ALL.

When Spirit operates on the physical plane we **call** it matter. The human mind invented this label to account for certain human experiences and has made the mistake of supposing this mere label to be an independent entity. In truth, matter is really the ONE SPIRIT acting within range of human sensation.

On the practical side, this truth leads to something vital. This is not the place to elaborate the philosophical reasons. What is important is the practice, which is this: **Admit into your consciousness only those things you wish to become manifest in your life.**

Whatever mental picture you dwell upon in thought is materialized, sooner or later, because you pump mental power into it to vitalize it. Your judgements of others are included in this. Better not to judge at all. Your personal viewpoint is limited. Go into detail about another's shortcomings, and you are vitalizing pictures of those very appearances. They will manifest in your life. For this is the law of creation, and you are a creator.

Perhaps you may object, "But this is nonsense! I know what I see. I know what I hear. Am I to lie about people and things?"

By no means. Just keep your tongue silent and you will avoid lying about yourself and others. Get rid of the negative pictures. How? Simply by looking more deeply and more attentively. Look for the positive. When you see it, speak it, and you will be speaking truth. Look for the beautiful. He who seeks finds.

Suppose you are ill. Harmony in the body is not to be attained by denying the actual inharmonies we all experience, more or less. Pain is friendly, and when we know the creative power of imagination, the actual facts of present inharmony can be transmuted into their opposites by **picturing and affirming just what appearances seem to deny.**

You can declare the present reality of your mental patterns of health. They have real substance. They can be solidified into healthy physical conditions. Picture the state of complete harmony in your body and affairs. Look at it again and again. Affirm its **present** reality repeatedly. **What you hold in consciousness, becomes!**

The woman in Key 8 is the same as the Empress of Key 3. She represents the process whereby creative imagination controls forces below the human level of manifestation. Self-conscious imagery, communicated to subconsciousness, creates what you desire. A constructive, normal desire, packed with vast eagerness, is a very powerful hint to your subconsciousness.

As you contemplate Key 8, realize that you are a Magician in your own right. You create by the power of your mind. Your personal creations are part of the cosmic creative process. **Creation is continuous. It has never been brought to an end. It goes on right now.** Ageless Wisdom teaches you how to make intelligent use of the power you already possess.

This practice will be easier for you if you review SEVEN STEPS, Lesson 2. You will find that what is written there has new meaning because you are not now quite the same person you were when you first studied that lesson.

Assisting you in the creation of the images you hold before your mind's eye is a specialized form of the Great Magical Agent, so often mentioned in these lessons. This is the serpent-power, **Kundalini.** Really, this is the power of **Spirit**, packed at the base of your spine. In most persons, this power is dormant, or nearly so. It may be aroused in various ways.

The serpent-power is particularly responsive to thought stimuli. In the Western School, care is taken to make the practical work almost wholly mental. Due to the awakened interest of modern students in Oriental methods, there are many systems purporting to teach how to awaken the serpent-power by direct concentration on bodily centers. Some are fantastic. Others really work but to experiment with them is dangerous to Western minds and bodies. Under the daily supervision of **competent** personal instructors, some of these methods may be used with comparative safety. They cannot be learned safely from books. The Western School's methods are, perhaps, not quite so rapid, but they lead **safely** to the same results.

Any process for releasing power in the human organism goes back to subconsciousness as the prime agent. You must work upon subconsciousness in order to perform the Great Work. Mental pictures are the most potent influences. Next in importance is the practice of talking directly to what may be called your cellular consciousness. Every one of the thirty trillion

cells in your body is a little animal waiting for you to train it. Tell the cells exactly what you expect from them, and they will work to carry out your bidding.

First, then, get your pictures clear and see them as **present** realities. Waste no time in denying negative appearances. The appearances, to be sure, are actual facts of a sort. But to dwell on them, even to deny them, is to emphasize and perpetuate them.

See what you want to be and do. Then tell your subconsciousness what you see and give the cellular consciousness its specific instructions as to the results desired.

You don't have to tell your subconsciousness **how** to accomplish results. In truth, only the greatest adepts have any clear notion **how** some of their wonders are performed. If you hire a competent cook, do you have to know all the recipes? No, you tell her what you want to eat and leave her free to exercise her special knowledge and skill. Do the same with subconsciousness. Then you will make good progress. Use Key 8 to transfer to subconsciousness a clear picture of the underlying principle at work in all control of subhuman forces. Its symbols tell the complete story. Intellectually, many details may now be beyond your comprehension; but **look at the Key!** Subconsciousness will act upon its pictorial suggestion.